Saskatchewan
Parks and
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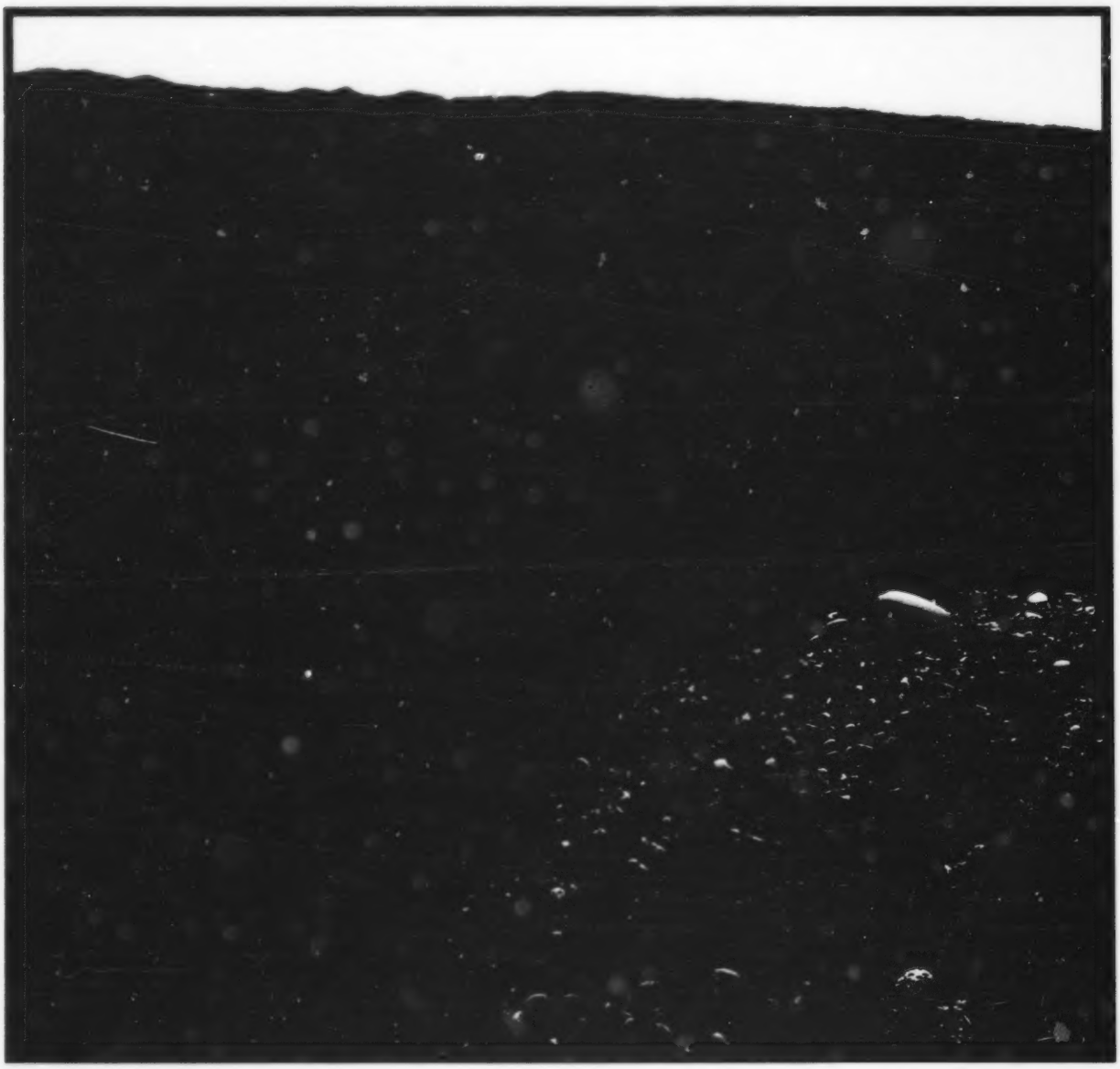
Resources

Parks
Branch

Hon. Lorne Kopelchuk
Minister

Management of Saskatchewan Park Lands

A Guide to Saskatchewan's Park Lands and How They Are Managed



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Minister's Message

Park lands are special places. They preserve and protect representative landscapes, unique features, and historical areas for present and future generations. People who visit provincial parks can learn about and enjoy the natural environment, relax, and have fun.

Many benefits arise from increased numbers of people visiting the parks. More services and facilities are needed, which produces new jobs for the local area. More money is also spent, improving the local economy.

Parks must be well operated and managed to encourage people to visit. Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources is responsible for establishing, operating and managing provincial parks. This document explains the development of the park system, current legislation and how our parks are now operated and managed.

I welcome any comments from the public.

Hon. Lorne Kopelchuk

Management of Saskatchewan Park Lands

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Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources

March 1990

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Cover photo: ***Conglomerate Cliffs, West Block, Cypress Hills Provincial Park***

Introduction

This document reflects current legislation, regulation and policy direction. It has been prepared to inform the public about Saskatchewan's park lands and how they are currently managed. It outlines:

- **The Parks Act** and why we have park lands,
- an overview of the park land system,
- how parks are managed,
- what kinds of facilities and activities are acceptable in park lands, and
- how development and land use proposals are evaluated.

Your comments would be most appreciated (see page 13).

Douglas Provincial Park

Park Lands - Special Places

Park lands are special places. They may either be areas representative of our diverse cultural history or natural environment, or a unique feature of the provincial landscape.

Saskatchewan's park lands have a dual role: to preserve and protect selected natural and cultural resources for future generations, and to provide recreational, educational and interpretive opportunities for the people of Saskatchewan and visitors to the province. Parks enable us to visit our past, interpret our environment, enjoy the present, and ponder the future.

Since park lands are special places to be protected and used for public recreation and education, they have to be managed in a special manner.

The Parks Act

The legislative base of Saskatchewan's park lands is provided by "The Parks Act," which was passed in 1986. The two goals expressed in the Parks Act are the protection of natural and cultural resources and the provision of recreation and education opportunities. The Act enables the province to:

- designate areas having park land potential as Park Land Reserves
- establish Provincial Parks to protect representative or unique features or examples of Saskatchewan's natural and cultural heritage and provide compatible forms of recreation
- establish four classes of Provincial Parks. The class indicates the type of park experience the public can expect and guides park management and development. The classes are:

  Wilderness Parks
  Natural Environment Parks
  Recreation Parks
  Historic Parks

- divide each park into a number of management zones to guide the location of facilities and services and management of the resource base
- establish generally smaller land areas for specific values and uses:

  Protected Areas
  Recreation Sites
  Historic Sites

- identify historic or natural points of interest using Provincial Markers
- specify and regulate uses of park lands

Saskatchewan's Park Land Base

	No.	Sq. Miles	Hectares
Provincial Parks (Total)	31	3,474.0	899,775.0
Recreation Parks	10	34.20	8,855.5
Natural Environment Parks	11	2,573.70	666,613.7
Historic Parks	9	1.05	270.8
Wilderness Parks	1	865.00	224,035.0
Protected Areas (Total)	21	79.60	20,607.6
Archaeological/Historic	14	1.81	468.0
Natural	7	77.78	20,139.6
Recreation Sites	169	164.00	42,477.4
Historic Sites	8	0.10	22.8
Provincial Markers	149		No associated land base
Park Land Reserve	1	745.00	1,295.0
Total Area (less Park Land Reserves) included in Park Lands		**3,717.7**	**962,882.8**
Percentage of Total Provincial Land and Water Base*			1.47

**Based on a provincial land area of 65,190,300 ha.*

Provincial Park System

Historical Development

The development of the provincial park system that now encompasses 31 Provincial Parks has occurred during four distinct periods.

The first period was in the early 1930's, following the transfer of natural resources from federal to provincial jurisdiction. Seven Provincial Parks were initially designated at this time:

Cypress Hills, Duck Mountain, Moose Mountain
Good Spirit Lake, Greenwater Lake,
Little Manitou Lake, and Katepwa Point.

All were former federal forest reserves except for the last two. Subsequently, two more parks were added in the late 30's:

Lac La Ronge and Nipawin.

In the late 50's and early 60's, six new parks were created, largely to provide recreation opportunities near urban areas:

The Battlefords, Buffalo Pound, Echo Valley,
Meadow Lake, Pike Lake, and Rowan's Ravine.

In 1961Little Manitou Lake became a Regional Park.

Following the development of Lake Diefenbaker, the third era in park establishment occurred. Three parks were established in the early 1970's:

Danielson, Douglas, and Saskatchewan Landing.

The Provincial Park System then totalled 17 Provincial Parks.

In 1986, with the Parks Act, an additional 14 Provincial Parks were designated:

First Wilderness Park
Clearwater River

Nine Former Historic Sites

Cannington Manor	Last Mountain House
Cumberland House	St. Victor's Petroglyphs
Fort Carlton	Steele Narrows
Fort Pitt	Touchwood Hills
Wood Mountain Post	

Four Former Recreation Sites

Blackstrap	Crooked Lake
Makwa Lake	Candle Lake

The Athabasca Sand Dunes were designated the first Park Land Reserve in 1989. The largest Provincial Park in Saskatchewan is Lac La Ronge Provincial Park, with 1,298 square miles or 336,197 hectares. The smallest Provincial Park in Saskatchewan is Cumberland House Provincial Historic Park, with 0.02 square miles or 5.18 hectares.

Regional and Urban Park Authorities are not included in the list because they are not gazetted under the Parks Act.

Classification

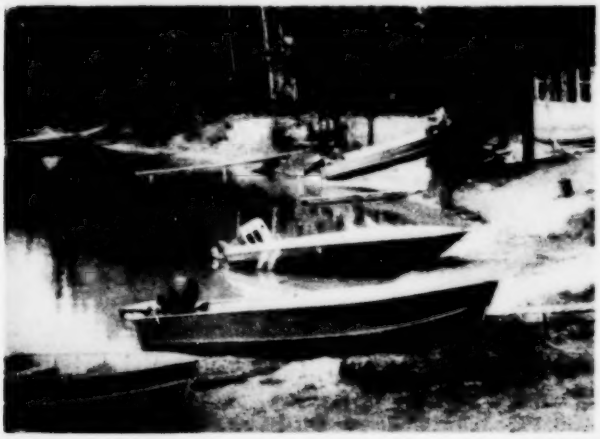
Wilderness Parks
- protect large tracts of undisturbed lands which have a high potential for human-powered wilderness recreation activities, such as canoe tripping, back-packing, and cross-country skiing

Clearwater River

Recreation Parks
- provide opportunities for a wide variety of intensive outdoor recreational activities that may require a natural environment setting

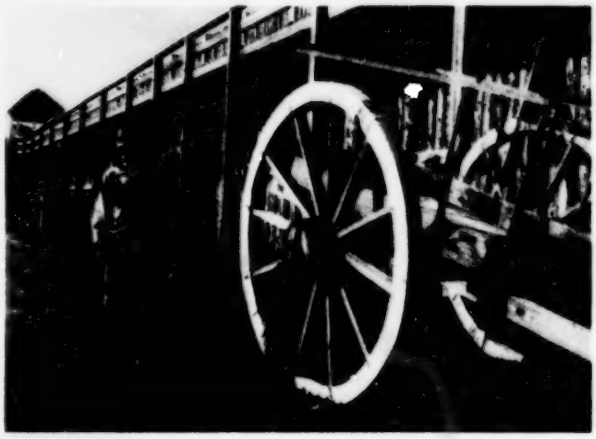
The Battlefords

Natural Environment Parks
- protect representative and unique landscapes which display the variety of ecological characteristics and features found in Saskatchewan's natural regions
- large tracts of land with a high potential for a wide variety of outdoor recreational and interpretive activities that require a natural environment setting



Meadow Lake

Historic Parks
- protect and interpret historic resources representative of themes and events which have contributed to the history of Saskatchewan



Fort Carlton

Other Park Lands

Protected Areas
- protect archaeological and natural sites with unique or irreplaceable resources

Nipekamew Sand Cliffs

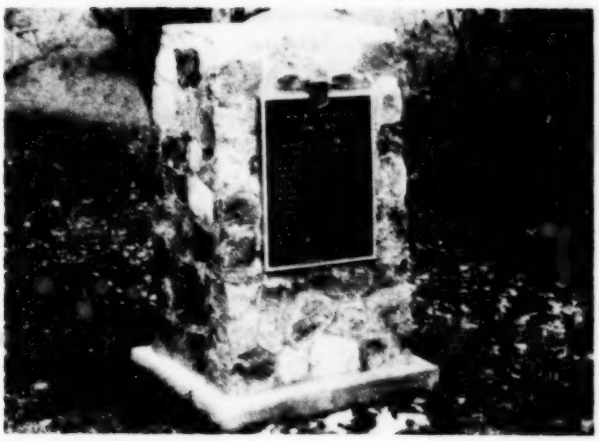
Historic Sites
- protect specific historic features of provincial significance

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Stanley Mission

Recreation Sites
- provide for a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities, such as campgrounds, picnic grounds and lake access points
- generally small areas
- widely distributed throughout the province

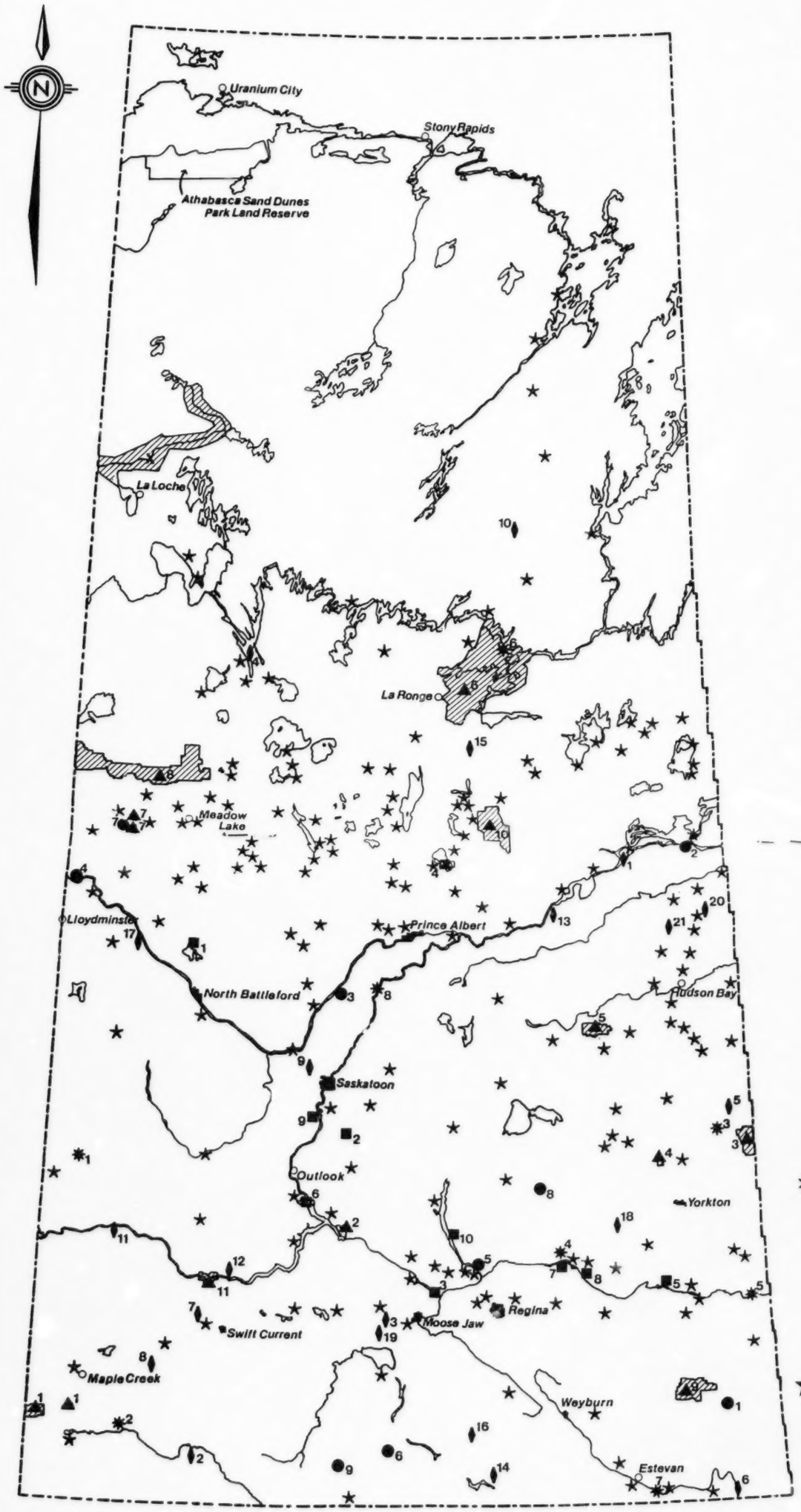
Regina Beach

Provincial Markers
- plaques acknowledging a point of interest
- have no land base



Hon. W.J. Patterson

Saskatchewan Provincial Park Lands



Provincial Historic Parks
1. Cannington Manor
2. Cumberland House
3. Fort Carleton
4. Fort Pitt
5. Last Mountain House
6. St. Victor's Petroglyphs
7. Steele Narrows
8. Touchwood Hills Post
9. Wood Mountain Post

Provincial Recreation Parks
1. The Battlefords
2. Blackstrap
3. Buffalo Pound
4. Candle Lake
5. Crooked Lake
6. Danielson
7. Echo Valley
8. Katepwa Point
9. Pike Lake
10. Rowan's Ravine

Provincial Natural Environment Parks
1. Cypress Hills
2. Douglas
3. Duck Mountain
4. Good Spirit Lake
5. Greenwater Lake
6. Lac La Ronge
7. Makwa Lake
8. Meadow Lake
9. Moose Mountain
10. Nipawin
11. Saskatchewan Landing

Provincial Wilderness Parks
1. Clearwater River

Protected Areas
1. Anderson Island (Natural)
2. Bakken-Wright Bison Drive (Archaeological)
3. Besant Midden (Archaeological)
4. Fort Black
5. Fort Livingstone
6. Glen Ewen Burial Mound
7. Gray Archaeological Site
8. Gull Lake (Archaeological)
9. Harder Archaeological Site
10. Hickson-Maribelli Lakes Pictographs
11. Lemsford Ferry Tipi Rings
12. Matador Grasslands (Natural)
13. Maurice Street (Natural)
14. Minton Turtle Effigy
15. Nipekamew Sand Cliffs (Natural)
16. Ogema Boulder Effigy
17. Pine Island Trading Post
18. Thomas Battersby (Natural)
19. Walter Felt Bison Drive
20. Waskwei River (Natural)
21. Wildcat Hill (Natural)

Historic Sites
1. Buffalo Rubbing Stone
2. Chimney Coulee
3. Fort Pelly #1
4. Fort Qu'Appelle-Touchwood Hills Trail
5. Hamona
6. Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Stanley Mission
7. La Roche Percee
8. South Branch House

Recreation Sites

Management of Saskatchewan Park Lands

Provincial Park Management

The following deals specifically with how Provincial Parks are managed, but generally applies to other types of park lands as well.

Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources is responsible to protect park lands and provide interpretive and recreation services through the establishment, operation and management of Provincial Parks. These activities are largely coordinated through the Parks Branch and the department's Operations Division, which is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the parks. The management of specific resources and land administration is coordinated with other program branches within the department: Fisheries, Forestry, Wildlife and Resource Lands.

In managing parks, the department is guided by a set of principles, zoning guidelines and policies. The principles are general and conform with the goals of legislation. Policies address specific land use and recreational issues.

Principles

The overriding general principle governing all park land use is that all recreation activities, visitor services, and resource management must conform with a specific park's classification, zoning, goals and objectives.

The protection and recreation objectives will be achieved by the entire park system. All uses or activities cannot be accommodated in every or any individual park.

Parks are long-term public institutions. Use and management must be non-destructive of the park resource. Uses should be compatible with the resource base and other recreational activities.

Activities within parks emphasize outdoor recreation experiences related to the park resource. Development and services should facilitate public enjoyment within that context.

Parks are major recreation and tourism attractions. However, not all recreation development and tourist services need be provided within the park itself. Some intensive recreation facilities, and tourist services catering to a larger market, should be located in areas adjacent to parks or within surrounding communities.

Renewable and non-renewable resources are managed in harmony with the natural environment and cultural heritage of the park and to maximize recreational opportunities for Saskatchewan residents.

Traditional resource uses practised by natives on specific park lands, such as hunting, trapping and fishing, are allowed to continue but are subject to specific park management guidelines.

Historical uses of specific park lands, such as cottaging, grazing, haying and mineral exploration, are generally allowed to continue but are subject to specific park or resource management guidelines.

Resource allocation and development are managed consistently across the system to optimize the economic and social benefits to Saskatchewan people.

Environmental impacts of all developments are minimized through appropriate reviews, mitigation and reclamation measures.

Park Land Zoning

A zoning plan divides a park into various management zones. Each zone identifies the type and extent of acceptable use, development, means of access, and management so that conservation and public use requirements of The Parks Act can be met. Zoning also provides specific criteria by which development proposals are evaluated. Seven zones have been established for Saskatchewan's park lands:

Protection Zone
- to protect rare, significant, endangered, special, and/or unique species and natural features

Wilderness Zone
- to provide areas capable of sustaining wilderness recreation experiences

Natural Zone
- to provide areas representative of the natural landscape and compatible recreation experiences

Historic Zone
- to preserve and interpret cultural resources

Resource Management Zone
- to accommodate short-term resource extraction or compatible resource use

Development Zone
- to provide areas for moderate to intensive recreational opportunities and visitor services

Access Zone
- to provide corridors for public and utility access within and through the park

Many land use pressures are exerted on Provincial Parks. Land uses must, however, conform to park classification and zoning. The table on the opposite page provides a description of facilities and activities that are generally permitted in each of the land use zones. There is provision under The Parks Act to have zoning regulations which will specify uses not acceptable within each zone. To date no zoning regulations have been established.

Permitted Activities and Facilities by Management Zones

Facilities	Zones: Protection	Wilderness	Natural	Historic	Access	Resource Management	Development
Picnicking			X		X		X
Sports Facilities							X
Visitor Centres				X			X
Golf Course							X
Swimming Area			X		X	X	X
Pool							X
Boat Launch			X		X	X	X
Boat Services							X
Food Services							X
Service Station							X
Store/Laundry							X
Camping					X		X
Primitive Camping		X	X			X	
Outfitting			X		X	X	X
Rental Accommodation							X
Park Administration Facilities				X	X		X
Nature/Ski Trails		X	X	X	X	X	X
Snowmobile Trails			X		X	X	X
Activities							
Angling	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Trapping			X	X	X	X	X
Hunting			X	X	X	X	
Sand and Gravel Extraction					X	X	X

Note: These are proposed zoning guidelines. Further public consultation is anticipated in advance of zoning regulations being developed.

Policies

For selected land and resource uses, the following policies generally apply.

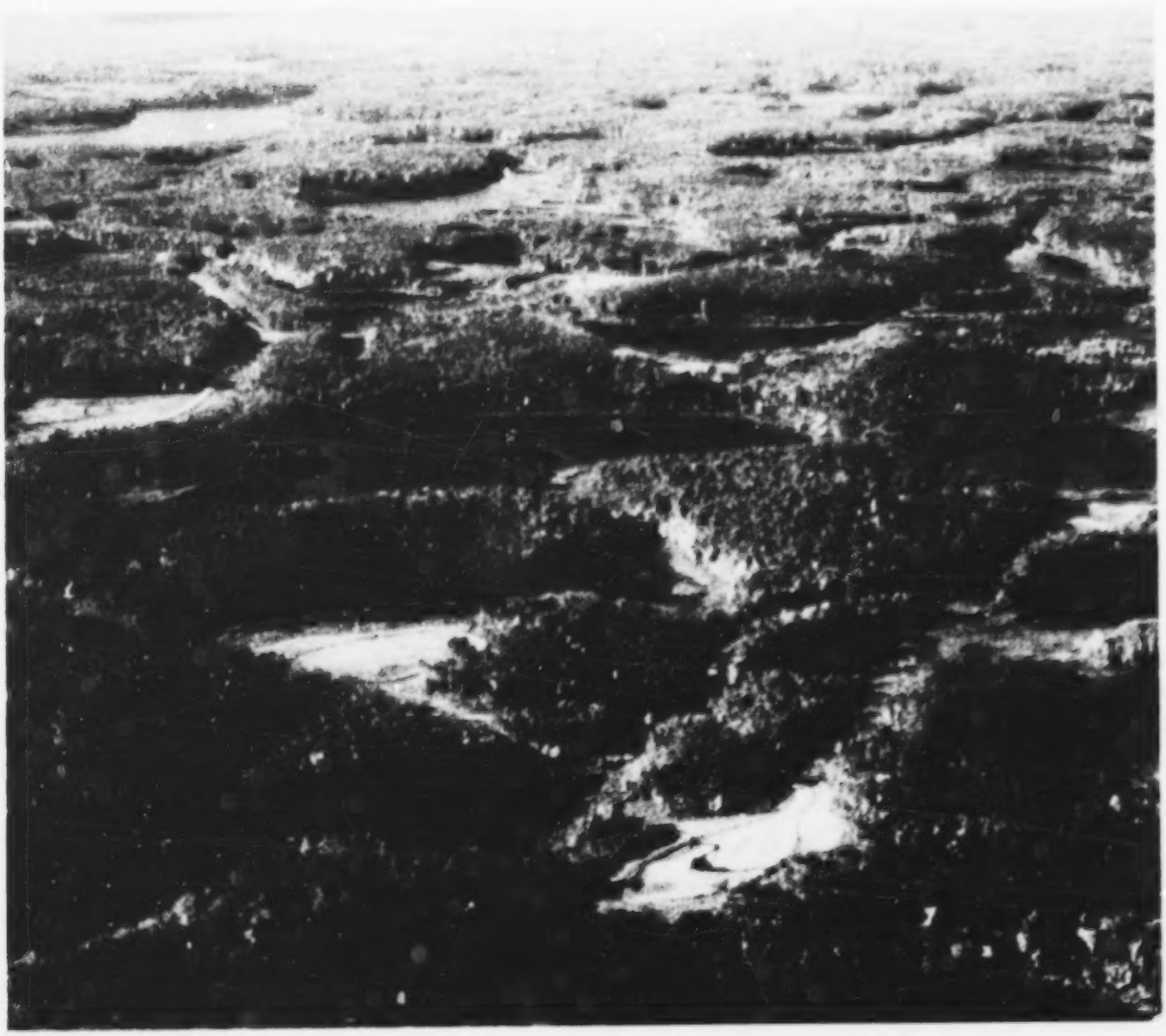
Angling
is allowed in all rivers and lakes regardless of zoning, subject to Provincial fisheries regulations.

Hunting
is generally allowed in Provincial Parks, subject to Provincial hunting regulations. It may be prohibited in Development, Wilderness and Protection zones.

Grazing
is permitted when traditional to a specific park and when the impact on interpretive and recreational use, or on the natural resource base, is not severe.

Trapping
is permitted as a resource management tool, where trapping is traditional, and by aboriginal peoples in new Provincial Parks, such as Clearwater River Provincial Park.

Gravel Extraction
is restricted to certain zones and, generally, for park purposes as long as it does not conflict with other park objectives.



Moose Mountain

Oil/Gas Development
is restricted to those parks where it has been an historical activity and only within a Resource Management Zone where it does not conflict with other park objectives.

Intensive Recreation and Visitor Services
is restricted to Access and Development zones.

Trail Systems
are designated and allowed, in wide variety, for hikers and off-road vehicles. The types of trails permitted vary with the class of the park and the zone.

Forest Harvesting
may only be permitted where it serves the park management objective to protect the ecological integrity of the vegetative community.

Mineral Exploration and Development
is restricted to only those existing parks where mineral claims exist and within the Mineral Exploration Zone of the Lac La Ronge Provincial Park.

Park Management Strategies

Management planning for each provincial park is now prepared in the context of a Park Management Strategy. The strategy provides an information base and management direction for protecting the resource base and developing recreation, interpretive and visitor services. It reflects and responds to circumstances pertaining to the individual park and provides park zoning. The strategy is implemented through the resource and visitor services management and development plans, and capital development.

Park management strategies provide the framework for evaluating all development and land use proposals. Public involvement is usually handled on an issue-by-issue basis.

Project Review Process

Parks are confronted with many land use issues on a daily basis. These include, among others, pressures to access park renewable and non-renewable resources, such as oil, gas, grass and forest, and requests to develop additional visitor services and recreation facilities. Some uses are compatible with park goals and objectives; others are not. Some may continue indefinitely; some may be phased out. Before any development can occur in a park, it must be approved by the department.

When development proposals are submitted to the department, they must be thorough, outlining the full nature of the development; potential impacts on the park, park users and the resources; proposed mitigation; and where required, restoration. The proposals are reviewed within the context of:
- the principles of the parks system
- the class of park
- park management strategy
- park land zoning

When the department reviews development proposals, it will seek satisfactory answers to the following questions:
- Who is the proposed project designed to serve?
- Is the use historical or traditional to the park?
- Why should the proposed project be allowed in the park or routed through the park?
- Are there alternative locations for the project?
- How will the project benefit the park or its visitors?
- How will the proposed project affect the park, as a special place?
- Is the proposed development compatible with the class of park?
- Is the proposed development compatible with the management goals and objectives established for that type of park?
- Is the proposed development appropriate for the park?
- Does the proposed development fit within the zoning plan?
- Do the benefits of the project outweigh the impacts?

Acceptable Uses
Uses that are often permissable in parks are:
- uses compatible with the class of park and the resource management objectives
- uses traditional to that park
- educational uses
- uses providing services to visitors

Unacceptable Uses
Uses that are often not permissable in parks are:
- non-resource related recreation activities or amusements traditionally located outside of parks
- uses not compatible with the class of park
- uses which are, or should be,available outside the park
- resource extraction damaging to the park environment

Authorization

If a project proposal is acceptable to the department, the activity/development will be authorized by:
- an annual, renewable Miscellaneous Use Permit, or
- a Land Lease, or
- a Commercial Lease.

Both permits and leases may include specific development, operating and reclamation conditions.

New Park Lands

The future development of the Provincial Parks system is based on guidelines and principles documented in a parks system plan. The key principles are to provide equal access to recreation for all citizens of Saskatchewan and to protect representative examples of all Saskatchewan's natural and cultural resources.

A first step towards establishing new park lands is the designation of a Park Land Reserve. A Park Land Reserve identifies the government's interest in designating the area under The Parks Act and provides a five year period to address conflicting land use issues, the boundary and the final type of designation.

Athabasca Sand dunes

Further Information

This document has presented a brief discussion of Saskatchewan's park lands. If you wish to comment on this document or receive further information, cut along the dotted line and forward this tear-out to:

Director of Parks,
Parks Branch,
Saskatchewan Parks and
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3211 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
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City/Town: _____

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Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Comments on "Management of Saskatchewan Park Lands" Document (If Any):

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Type of Further Information Desired:

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